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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-04

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 H-02 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DODE-00 /051 W
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O R 212102Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9182
INFO PANCANAL
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 6559

EYES ONLY FOR CINC AND GOVERNOR PARFITT

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PN
SUBJECT: TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: PANAMA 6535

1. I CALLED FOREIGN MINISTER BOYD TODAY TO ASK FOR A MEETING. HE SAID HE WOULD RECEIVE ME IMMEDIATELY AND I WENT TO HIS OFFICE (12:30 P.M. LOCAL TIME). I TOLD HIM THAT I WAS AUTHORIZED BY MY GOVERNMENT TO DELIVER A REPLY TO HIS NOTE OF SEPT. 17. I HANDED HIM THE TEXT (SEE REFTEL). I TOLD HIM THAT WE REJECTED THE ALLEGATIONS CONTAINED IN HIS NOTE AND PROTESTED THE VARIOUS INSINUATIONS THEREIN. I SUGGESTED HE READ OUR NOTE AND THEN RAISE ANY QUESTIONS HE WISHED. HE READ THE NOTE. I AM SURE HE WAS IMPRESSED BY OUR REFERENCE TO THE STATEMENT OF VICE PRESIDENT GONZALEZ (EIGHTH PARAGRAPH) BECAUSE HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ACCUSING MY GOVERNMENT OR ANY OF ITS AGENCIES OF PARTICIPATION IN THE RECENT EVENTS.

2. THE MINISTER THEN TOOK WHAT I REGARD AS A DIVERSIONARY TACK BY SAYING HE WAS DISAPPOINTED I HAD NOT SEEN FIT TO ANSWER HIS CHARGE THAT OUR LOCAL ARMED FORCES RADIO STATION HAD BROAD-
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CAST AN UNTRUTHFUL STATEMENT (THAT BUILDINGS WERE ON FIRE IN

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PANAMA DURING THE DISTRUBANCE) THAT HAD CONTRIBUTED TO QUOTE
PANIC UNQUOTE AMONG SOME PANAMANIANS. I TOLD THE MINISTER;
(A) THAT I WAS THERE TO DISCUSS SERIOUS MATTERS, NOT ONE MINOR
INACCURACY IN A RADIO BROADCAST; (B) THAT I HAD DISCUSSED THIS
WITH MY COLLEAGUES IN SOUTHCOM AND THEY WERE MAKING EVERY EFFORT
TO ASSURE THAT NO MISTAKES APPEARED IN SCN BROADCASTS; (C)
THAT THERE WERE FIRES IN PANAMA ON THE DAY IN QUESTION, THOUGH
NOT IN BUILDINGS. FINALLY, I SAID I PRESUMED HE WAS AWARE THAT
HIS OWN MINISTERY OF GOVERNMENT HAD MADE A STATEMENT SOME DAYS
AGO CRITICIZING THE INACCURATE AND QUOTE DANGEROUS UNQUOTE
BROADCASTS MADE BY SEVERAL PANAMANIAN RADIO STATIONS. I THEN
ADDED, IN MUCH THE SAME IRRITATED TONE HE HAD USED, THAT IF I
WERE TO CALL HIS ATTENTION TO EVERY BROADCAST FROM A PANAMANIAN
RADIO STATION ON THAT OFFENDED ME OR MY GOVERNMENT, WE WOULD
FIND LITTLE ELSE TO TALK ABOUT. AT THIS POINT, HE COOLDED DOWN,
HAVING REALIZED, I BELIEVE, THAT I WAS NOT GOING TO BE PUT ON
THE DEFENSIVE BY RED HERINGS.

3. HE THEN TOOK OFF ON THE ZONIANS. HE SAID THERE WAS NO DOUBT
IN HIS MIND THAT QUOTE PEOPLE IN THE ZONE UNQUOTE WE BITTERLY OP-
POSED TO ANY NEW TREATY BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENTS. THEY WERE
OPPOSED TO THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IN PANAMA AND WOULD DO ANY-
THING TO UPSET IT. HE HAD NO DOUBT THEY HAD PLAYED SOME ROLE
IN RECENT EVENTS. HE SAID THAT IF THE U.S. COULD SPEND QUOTE
BILLIONS UNQUOTE TO RELOCATE PEOPLE FROM RHODESIA, PERHAPS WE
SHOULD CONSIDER DOING THE SAME HERE.

4. I TOLD MINISTER I DID NOT BELIEVE IN TAGGING PEOPLE WITH
LABELS THAT GENERALIZED SPECIFIC PROBLEMS. I SAID THERE WERE
MANY INTELLIGENT, PATRIOTIC PEOPLE IN THE ZONE WHO BELIEVED THAT
THE TIME HAD COME FOR SOME FORM OF NEW ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN
OUR COUNTRIES. MOST OF THESE PEOPLE WERE, QUITE NATURALLY,
CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR FUTURE AND THE FUTURE OF AN ORGANIZATION
TO WHICH THEY HAD GIVEN MANY YEARS OF THEIR LIVES. I FRANKLY
ADMITTED THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE IN THE ZONE WHO WERE IRREVOCABLY
OPPOSED TO ANY NEW TREATY AND WHO DID NOT LIKE THE PRESENT
GOVERNMENT. BUT I SAID AS FAR AS I KNEW THERE WAS NOT ONE IOTA
OF EVIDENCE TO PROVE ANY QUOTE CONSPRIACY UNQUOTE OR ANY OVERT
ANTI-GOVERNMENT MOVES. I ALSO NOTED THAT THERE WERE A GOOD MANY
PANAMANIANS WHO OPPOSED A NEW TREATY UNDER SOME CONDITIONS
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AND WHO CERTAINLY OPPOSED THE GOVERNMENT, AS RECENT EVENTS
HAD SHOWN. WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT, I SAID, WERE THE AL-
LEGATIONS OF PLANNED DISRUPTION AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT VIOLENCE
AS A MATTER OF DIRECTED POLICY. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF THIS
AND I HAD TO REJECT ANY SUCH SUGGESTION OUT OF HAND.

5. I SAID THAT THE MINISTER AND HIS COLLEAGUES WHO PROFESSED
TO BE IN FAVOR OF A NEW TREATY AND THE EARLY RESUMPTION OF

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NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE THINKING OF STATESMANLIKE WAYS IN WHICH
TO MAKE THEIR CASE. IT DID NOT HELP AT ALL TO RESORT TO THE KIND
OF PROPAGANDA EXERCISE WE WERE DISCUSSING. NOR DID IT
HELP FOR PANAMA TO GO UNILATERALLY TO U.S. NEWSPAPERS TO MAKE
ITS CASE BY ONE-SIDED PRESENTATIONS AND INCOMPLETE FACTS. HE
CLAIMED THAT PANAMA HAD QUOTE DONE EVERYTHING IT CAN UNQUOTE TO
PRESENT ITS CASE REASONABLY. I SAID I HAD TO DISAGREE. I FELT THAT
PANAMA HAD NOT EVEN BEGUN TO MAKE ITS CASE IN A QUIET AND REASONED
WAY WHERE IT WOULD COUNT THE MOST. INSTEAD, IT HAD--IN PART
TO CONCEAL ITS DOMESTIC PROBLEMS--TRIED TO BLAME OTHERS
FOR ITS SEASON OF DISCONENT.

6. BOYD THEN, FOR THE FIRST TIME, BEGAN TO SHOW SOME INDICATIONS
OF REFLECTION. HE SAID HE WANTED TO TAKE THE LONG VIEW. HE SAID
HE WAS WRONG TO FOCUS ON THINGS LIKE RADIO BROADCASTS. HE SAID
HE HOPED THAT HIS COMING TRIP TO THE U.S. WOULD AFFORD
OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK WITH OFFICIALS WHO COULD BE HELPFUL
IN THIS SITUATION. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WAS TO GET THE
NEGOTIATIONS REVIVED, HE SAID. IT WAS IMPORTANT NOT ONLY
HISTORICALLY, HE SAID, BUT IN TERMS OF ITS
MEANING FOR THE PRESENT UNSETTLED CONDITIONS HERE. HE
MENTIONED HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT WITH THE SECRETARY IN NEW YORK.
HE INDICATED HE MIGHT ALSO TRY TO SEE PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON--
HE MENTIONED VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER, GENERAL BROWN AND HIS
FORMER UN COLLEAGUE GEORGE BUSH. I TOLD HIM I THOUGHT
THIS A MUCH MORE POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH THAN
TRYING TO USE TACTICS DESIGNED TO FORCE OR PRESSURE MY
COUNTRY. THOSE TACTICS, I SAID, WILL NOT WORK AND YOU SHOULD
KNOW IT.

7. IN CONCLUSION, I TOLD THE MINISTER WE DID NOT INTEND TO
PUBLISH THE TEXT OF OUR NOTE BUT THAT WE WOULD CONFIRM IF ASKED
THATWE HAD ANSWERED THE PANAMANIAN NOTE OF LAST WEEK AND HAD
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REJECTED ITS ALLEGATIONS. THE MINISTER, TO MY SURPRISE,
SAID HE SAW NOTHING WRONG WITH PUBLISHING THE NOTE. QUOTE I
BELIEVE IN LETTING PEOPLE KNOW THE TRUTH UNQUOTE HE SAID(SIC).
IN THAT CASE, I SAID, WE WOULD CONSIDER HOW BEST TO HANDLE
THE MATTER, NOTING WE HAD NO DESIRE TO CONTINUE THE PROPAGANDA
WAR AS SUCH. IN LEAVING, I WISHED HIM A SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY TO
THE U.S.
JORDEN

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